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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

BOOK NOTICES.

ROMANCE AND REVERIE; POEMS BY EDGAR FAWCETT.—It was but recently that we expressed our satisfied approbation of the volume entitled "Song and Story" by the same author. The grace, charm and true beauty of many of the poems contained therein, gained a response from the finer susceptibilities of the mind. We little dreamed that while we were writing that notice he had already prepared another work which would so soon claim our delighted attention. Nor could we believe that the new volume would rise from beauty to grandeur, from grace to profundity. It shows a most remarkable growth, a deepening and widening of the whole being. And it does not impress one as the outcome of particular literary studentship, the coning of books, the culture of the schools, for that had all been attained before; but it is rather an exposé of that refinement of the spirit, that solidifying of character, that tone and thorough dependence upon one's own resources which can only exist when intellectual maturity is in its prime. It seems as though this man had sat down to his work rich in the accretions of broad experience, from which he had gained the power to produce these poems without outside aid. They speak themselves forth from his inner nature. They are firm, strong and real. They emphasize as only true poetry can the situations in human life which he has chosen to portray. With a touch he makes a picture. We see life as it is. Of more than eighty poems nearly all are short, and as significant as short. His similes and metaphors have taken a larger tone. His comparisons are richer in meaning without losing any of their beauty. The range of topics is remarkable, including thoughts from "Fairyland" to "War;" from "Bigotry" to "Space;" from "Tolerance" to "Eternity." Love, with him, has its peculiar phases. The pain of its more subtle mood he voices. With still keener shafts of satire he pierces the shams of religious dogmatism. With still more noble liberality he shows his supreme reverence for all that is truly Christ-like. The beautiful volume so carefully gotten up by TICKNOR & COMPANY, of Boston, may be taken in the hand when in any mood, and its pages will prove sympathetic. It is to be hoped that lovers of poetry like this will keep the volume ever near them as a source of intellectual exhilaration and spiritual advancement. For any poem instinct with the soul of the writer is like beauty "its own excuse for being." These flow from a crystal fountain.

TO THOSE unfamiliar with the works of John Fiske the announcement that HOUGHTON & MIFFLIN, of Boston, have issued a newly uniform edition entitled, respectively, "Myths and Myth Makers," "Darwinism," "Excursions of an Evolutionist," "The Unseen World," and "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," together with two smaller volumes, entitled "The Testing of Man," and "The Idea of God," will not appear as a matter of unusual interest. To those who are familiar and who wish to possess in full the writings of an author whose every page carries a weight of profound significance to every deep thinker, the heralding of such an edition magnificently printed by the Riverside Press, on thick creamy paper with gilt tops, and thoroughly well bound, will cause a real glow of pleasure. For to have fine thoughts presented in fine form, is to receive an added gratification. It would be a work of supererogation at this late day to either praise or criticize the early works of Mr. Fiske. It would be somewhat as though one should rise up to commend on the works of Emerson, or to make remarks about the poetry of Longfellow. His reputation is so firmly established as being one of the greatest thinkers of this country, his style so universally acknowledged to be the acme of clean cut English that to express new admiration were to provoke a smile. But writing as a student of those theories and conclusions in science offered to the modern world by the stupendous writers of England and Germany, one may be permitted to say with unlimited enthusiasm how practical and helpful have been all of Fisk's works, in the condensing and rounding of ideas. It is as though some great astronomer to whom the problems of the heavens are as child's play, so far has he passed beyond the mere mathematical data of his science, should condescend for the enlightenment of those less erudite and less persevering, to write a treatise containing all necessary conclusions, the very pith and sap of his immense knowledge, the discoveries of others and probabilities for the future. For in this comparatively short series of volumes, Mr. Fiske has condensed the whole body of ascertained fact scientifically regarded as the origin of man; and sociologically he has propounded a system of philosophy which has finally led him to the optimistic opinion that the whole process of evolution tends toward and will result in supreme spiritualization. This he has done not entirely by organization, for the scope of the subject would preclude that possibility; but by happy adaptation of the best ascertained learning of the nations. What may probably be called an origination with him, however, is his argument of the prolongation of infancy, and without doubt, it is upon this, his reputation as a discourses will rest. This great work, begun

at nineteen years of age, when he published the most remarkable *critique* of Buckle's History of Civilization which had appeared, and which startled the scientific literary world with its bold overthrowing of many of the theories of that brilliant writer, has been continued faithfully through a long life devoted to similar topics, especially those in any way connected with the gradual advancement of intellectual evolution. To him we owe the unspeakable benefit of a truthful exposition of scientific thought accompanied by a spirit of reverence and religious feeling rarely to be found thus potently combined. Actuated by superb confidence in an all-ordering higher Power he elevates the soul while he satisfies the reason and captivates the imagination by the poetry of his style. We learn through one of the most prominent publishers of this city that Mr. Fiske is now engaged upon a work of American History, and that while at first he contemplated making but two volumes the subject has so grown upon him that he now believes it will occupy six. It is needless to say that such an addition to the historical literature of the country will be received with gratitude and enthusiasm.—C. L. D.

"AS IT WAS WRITTEN: a Jewish Musicians Story," by Sidney Luska and published by Messrs. CASSELL & COMPANY, is a well conceived and admirably written story with a very weak *denouement* and a display of exceedingly beautiful language. There is considerable knowledge of music and almost as much of human nature.

It is the story of a young man, a musician, who is arrested, tried and acquitted for the murder of his betrothed, whose mysterious killing is the theme of the story and gives the touch of humanity to the musician's character. It is finally discovered through the medium of a dream that the young man did the murder himself while under the temporary control of his father's spirit and in the fulfillment of an obligation placed upon him as an infant by that father. It was the culmination of a revenge upon a certain family hated by the father, and of which the young girl, unknown to her lover, was a member.

The ending is therefore rather unsatisfactory, and it is unfortunate that a book showing such talent in its arrangement and so pleasing in phraseology should terminate in such a tremulous manner. The creditable quality in an extravagant or unnatural plot is the boldness of its conception; when truth or possibility is lost sight of the only satisfactory substitute is cleverness, as in Poe's stories for example their improbability is compensated for by their originality. The most horrible plot is redeemed in this way, but in Mr. Luska's work the idea is sufficiently horrible, but has no cleverness to take one's mind away from the horror.

It will well repay reading for it is prettily constructed and has many excellent passages.

WHILE Brander Matthews cannot lay claim to the originality and freshness that is a feature of Frank P. Stockton's writings, still he is a pleasing writer, and in his "Secret of the Sea," which is the title of the latest volume of his short pieces, there is much that is interesting and pleasing. The story, which gives the name to the book is mild and good, as are the others, "Love at First Sight," "Brief as a Woman's Love," "Perturbed Spirits," &c., none of them reaching any very exalted excitement, and with the exception of "Perturbed Spirits" none of them starting any new idea. The best production from Mr. Matthews in a small way of late, was his sketch in a bobtail car, modestly placed in September *Century*.

THE ART AMATEUR for October gives an admirable crayon study of a "Flower Girl of Picardy," a spirited sketch of a "Parisian Fencing Master" by Jules L. Stewart; some interesting illustrations of painted glass windows, and the usual profuse array of designs for china painting, embroidery, repoussé decoration and other art work. The articles on flower painting, on sketching from nature, on "motive" in painting, on harmonious coloring in needlework, and on tapestry painting are of especial utility. THE ART AMATEUR has for years been indispensable to art lovers and art students. Montague Marks, Publisher, 23 Union Square, New York.

THE IRISH QUESTION, in pamphlet form, has been published by CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS at the price of ten cents. It is Mr. Gladstone's own exposition of his course in regard to the Irish and what led to it, appropriately divided into "The History of an Idea" and "Lessons of the Election."

The majority of persons in this country are more or less interested in the subject and for this reason aside from the universal respect in which its author is held and the attention which his words would naturally attract, the pamphlet can be profitably read.

"STOCKTON'S STORIES" have been issued by SCRIBNER'S SONS, New York, in a new edition of two volumes.

Mr. Stockton's stories have been exceedingly popular and widely known through the magazine literature of the day, this gathering of them together is a good idea and being in handy shape and size they will doubtless meet with a large sale, as they deserve. His best pieces are apparently in this collection and it seems to be the cream of his work.